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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9148
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000347

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TAGS: PREL PGOV NP

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL FALLON URGES POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS TO
MOVE FORWARD

REF: 05 KATHMANDU 2556

Classified By: AMB James F. Moriarty, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

PARTIES WAITING FOR KING TO REACH OUT TO THEM

¶1. (C) On February 1, Admiral William J. Fallon, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, met with Ram Sharan Mahat, Central Committee Member, Nepali Congress Party (NC); K.P. Oli, Central Committee Member, Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML); and Minendra Rizal, Central Committee Member, Nepali Congress - Democratic Party (NC-D), to ascertain what the political parties viewed as the way forward. All three leaders stressed that they did not trust the King and did not feel that the Parties' making a first move toward reconciliation would be prudent. Mahat opined that, when the Maoist insurgency began, it was a struggle between only the Maoists and government. Since the royal takeover of February 1, 2005, Nepali politics had become a triangular struggle between the Palace, Parties, and the Maoists. He added that if the Parties made the first overture to the King, the Parties would be seen as weak and further marginalized by the King. Rizal argued that the Parties had to hold the middle ground between the Palace and Maoists for there to be any hope of peace in the future. He said the King had pushed the Parties aside, and the Parties had decided to test the Maoists' intentions by agreeing to the 12-point understanding (reftel). Rizal noted that, if the Maoists did not lay down their arms, the Parties could not cooperate with them and they would be exposed as the violent terrorists they were; if they laid down arms and came into the mainstream, the King would then have to talk to a united front. Rizal concluded that if the King reached out first, the Parties would respond positively. In contrast, Oli opined the only solution was for the King to give up power. Mahat commented that the Parties could only approach the King through a neutral mediator, with the sole agenda of transferring power back to the Parties.

FALLON ENCOURAGES PARTIES TO MOVE FORWARD

¶2. (C) Admiral Fallon stressed to the Party leaders the need

to move from their unbending positions and take a step forward. He explained that the United States wanted to see democratic governance in Nepal and the active participation of its citizens in running the country. The Admiral mentioned that in this meeting with the King, the King had said his top priority was security (septel). The Admiral agreed that security was important for Nepal, but he had told the King that security could only be achieved when a majority of Nepalis agreed on and were part of a democratic consensus on how to achieve security. Rizal asserted that security could only be achieved politically by winning the hearts and minds of the people. Admiral Fallon noted that the Maoists were becoming increasingly violent and urged the Parties to be creative and think of a positive way to take incremental steps toward reconciliation with the King.

COMMENT

¶3. (C) The three Party leaders were adamant in their opposition to reaching out to the King. The Admiral persuasively suggested the leaders look at the current impasse with the King from a perspective broader than their narrow partisan interests. The Parties appear locked into positions and unreceptive to any overtures from the King, at least for now.

¶4. (U) Admiral Fallon cleared this cable.

MORIARTY